

Date: November 6, 2006

To: Monica Desai at FCC, Carol Crim at FDA and Dane Snowden at CTIA

I am writing to you to ask for your assistance with assigning hearing aids RF ratings. For your reference, I am the mother of a 12-year old daughter who is hard of hearing and I am also the Chair of the Hearing Access Program (<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/05/arts/05hear.html> ex=1162962000&en=f6fbc98c1b74c809&ei=5070).

I have recently learned while trying to purchase a cell phone for my daughter that prior to purchasing a HAC cell phone, its critical to know whether the user's hearing aid has appropriate radio frequency (RF) immunity levels. It is my understanding from speaking to Linda Kozma Spytek at Gallaudet Universtiy's TAP Program that in order to have optimal cell phone compatibility with hearing aids, hearing aids need an RF rating of at least two. The RF rating of at least two ensures that minimal interference is achieved even if a M3/M4 and T3/T4 cell phone is utilized. Below is my recent letter to the Editor for the New York Times that details this issue.

The problem is that a hearing aid's RF rating is not commonly known. My phone call with Linda was the first time that I was ever advised to look at RF ratings when purchasing a hearing aid. My daughter's Audiologist was also unaware of this information. She contacted the hearing aid manufacture of my daughter's aids only to be told that they had no idea but they would contact Denmark to find out the information. Why is such critical information not readily available?

It is therefore important to ensure that consumers are aware of RF ratings when purchasing their hearing aids because everything the FCC is doing for HAC cell phones will be for naught if the person's hearing aids are not appropriate. As such, I am writing to ask for your assistance to resolve this issue. I am ccing Monica Desai, the Bureau Chief for the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Dane Snowden of the CTIA, The Wireless Association. Perhaps, we can all work together to resolve what appears to be a simple problem.

Thank you for all of your assistance and help with this issue. My contact numbers are either 212-988-8099 or 917-975-5642.

Best,

Janice Schacter

Phones and Hearing Aids (1 Letter)

Published: October 23, 2006

To the Editor:

Re “The Quagmire of Making International Cellphone Calls,” by Joe Sharkey (On the Road column, Business Day, Oct. 17):

If Mr. Sharkey thought he had difficulty deciphering the international cellphone networks, he should try buying a cellphone that works with hearing aids.

Effective Sept. 16, the Federal Communications Commission mandates that cellphone providers must offer at least two handset models that have a minimum M3/T3 rating. The M rating (M3 or 4) represents microphone interference on a hearing aid and the T rating (T3 or 4) represents the hearing aid telecoil compatibility level. The higher the rating, the better.

My daughter needs an M4/T4 rating. But M4/T4 is available only in the C.D.M.A. technology and not in G.S.M., which my daughter will need this summer in Europe. C.D.M.A. does not work in Europe.

Two G.S.M. providers, Cingular and T-Mobile, have said M4/T4 is not achievable. But one has to wonder if cellphone carriers are allocating sufficient resources to overcome this hurdle. How come they are able to put a camera, MP3 player and every other imaginable device in a cellphone, but they cannot overcome this hurdle?

While the network issue may be confusing for Mr. Sharkey, at least he has options. People who wear hearing aids do not.

Janice Schacter □ New York, Oct. 17, 2006

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